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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

PROPOSED PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1998-1999

UNITED NATIONS REFORM: MEASURES AND PROPOSALS

Letter dated 24 October 1997 from the Secretary-General addressed to the Chairman of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples

Please accept my appreciation for the recent meetings with you and the co-sponsors of the draft resolution relating to the decolonization programme in the United Nations system (A/C.4/52/L.4/Rev.1). These discussions were most useful in clarifying the questions that have been raised in this context.

I should like to reiterate, in the strongest terms, that I attach the highest priority to the decolonization programme. I am firmly committed to maintaining its importance and status in the context of the Organization's work in the political arena.

Consistent with this approach, and in response to the views expressed by a number of delegations in our meetings, I have decided that the substantive responsibilities for the decolonization programme will be maintained in the Department of Political Affairs, which will remain the focal point for matters relating to decolonization. The related substantive services to the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples will be provided by a discrete 'Decolonization Unit', to which the necessary staff resources will be made available.

The technical secretariat servicing responsibilities for the decolonization programme will be carried out by the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services as outlined in my letter of 17 March 1997 (A/51/829).

I should note that the overall effect of these measures will be to strengthen Secretariat resources in support of the decolonization programme. I am confident that coordination and cooperation between the two departments in the area of decolonization will ensure that the Secretariat provides all the support required to the relevant intergovernmental bodies in fulfilling the mandates entrusted to them by the General Assembly.

I trust that these arrangements will set at rest the concerns expressed by interested delegations.

(Signed) Kofi A. ANNAN